

CONFIDENTIAL

8 November 1965

MEMORANDUM**SUBJECT: Analysis of Press Reporting on Situation in Nigeria**

1. Nigeria's Western Region is experiencing considerable violence as a result of dissatisfaction on the part of the declared losers in last month's regional legislative election. The election was marked--before, during and after--by gross irregularities on the part of the incumbent party to ensure its continued control of the regional government.

2. At this time, however, our information does not substantiate the press assessment that Nigeria has been plunged into its worst political crisis since independence. In its most recent situation report the US Embassy on 4 November took a relatively relaxed view of the current turmoil. Although noting that violence had increased during the preceding two weeks, the embassy characterized it as "localized" and confined largely to five of the 16 regional divisions. It attributed the disorders partly to party thugs and partly to an outburst of political temper between local party factions.

3. The same embassy assessment stated that there was no evidence of a widespread or well-organized civil uprising and that police and army forces in the region appeared strong enough to prevent the spread of the disorders to other areas.

4. The electoral losers in the west, who are allied with the governing party of the Eastern Region against the Northern Region's conservative ruling party which dominates the federal government, evidently hope to keep the unrest going as long as possible. Their apparent aim is to oblige the federal government to declare an emergency in the west, install an interim non-political administration, and eventually hold a new election. However, the key federal authorities--all northerners--will almost certainly strongly support the declared victor party with increased federal police or military units if needed.

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5. Our main concern is that somehow this situation might develop to the point of an early secession attempt by the Eastern Region. Although such an evolution does not now seem likely, we feel it is at least a possibility. The longer term danger of a secession move by the east has probably been substantially increased by election rigging in the west. Eastern leaders have on several occasions since the 11 October balloting in the west revealed acute bitterness over the outcome and a significantly weakened commitment to Nigerian unity and political federation.

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No. 403-65 (SENSITIVE)

OCI - NOTICE OF SPECIAL PAPER

Date _____

SUBJECT

: ~~Atlantic Nuclear Defense~~

REQUESTED BY

: McGeorge Bundy--Cline--

STATINTL

PURPOSE

:

DESIRED LENGTH

:

SPECIAL DISSEM

: Category A (Selected)

GRAPHICS?

COORDINATION

OUTSIDE OCI

:

ASSIGNED TO

:

DUE DATE:

OAD REVIEW

:

STATINTL

1. O/DCI _____

4. CS/II _____

6. WA _____

7. AA _____

8. SSBA _____

2. O/DDI _____

5. DAY/SIDO _____

P/A _____

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P/A _____

3. O/ADCI _____

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